

photos

3 hrs travel

18 JUN 1995 28

EPIDEMIOLOGIC INVESTIGATION REPORT

1. CASE NO. <u>X9510215</u> 950120CCC2262		2. INVESTIGATOR'S ID 8 1 2 3		3. OFFICE CODE 8 3 0	
4. DATE OF ACCIDENT YR MO DAY 9 10 6 10 0 4		5. DATE INVESTIGATION INITIATED YR MO DAY 9 5 0 3 0 2			
6. SYNOPSIS OF ACCIDENT OR COMPLAINT At 2:00AM, a neighbor discovered a fire in a temporarily unoccupied single family residence. The fire began in the kitchen and investigating officials believe the point of origin was a countertop electric toaster oven. The homeowner's insurance company paid out \$115,000 to settle the claim. There were no injuries associated with this incident.					
7. LOCATION (Home, school, etc.) Home 1 0		8. CITY Watertown		9. STATE M N	
10A. FIRST PRODUCT Toaster oven 0 2 1 6		11A. TRADE/BRAND NAME, MODEL NUMBER, MANUFACTURER & ADDRESS Mod. B1TR020 Black & Decker Corp., 701 E. Joppa Rd., Towson, Md 21204			
10B. SECOND PRODUCT None 0 0 0 0		11B. TRADE/BRAND NAME, MODEL NUMBER, MANUFACTURER & ADDRESS			
12. AGE OF VICTIM 9 9 9		13. SEX (Use numerical code) MALE - 1 FEMALE - 2 UNKNOWN - 3 9		14. DISPOSITION no injury 0	
15. INJURY DIAGNOSIS No injury 7 1		16. BODY PART 9 9		17. RESPONDENT(S) (Mother, Friend) Homeowner, attorney, ins. adj., engineer 3	
18. TYPE INVESTIGATION ON SITE 1 TELEPHONE 2 OTHER 3 3		19. TIME SPENT 1 2 0		20. ATTACHMENTS multi 9	
21. CASE SOURCE engineer 1 3		22. REVIEWED BY YR MO DAY 8 1 3 0 9 5 0 6 0 8			
23. PERMISSION TO DISCLOSE NAMES (NON-NEISS CASES ONLY) CPSC MAY DISCLOSE MY NAME <input type="checkbox"/> CPSC MAY NOT DISCLOSE MY NAME <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
24. NARRATIVE (See instructions on Other Side)				25. REGIONAL OFFICE DIRECTOR REVIEW DATE	

MFR/PRVLR NOTIFIED 9/5/95
 No Comments made
 Comments attached
 Excisions/Revisions
 Firm has not requested
 further notice

(USE OTHER SIDE AND ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY)

SUMMARY:

This case was assigned as a follow up to a report from a forensics electrical engineer. There had been a fire in a single family home and investigating officials believed the point of origin was a counter top electric toaster oven. Respondents include the home owner, an insurance adjuster, an electrical engineer, and the attorney retained by the homeowner's insurance company.

The homeowner, his wife, and their two children lived in a two story single family home. Among the appliances in the kitchen was a counter top toaster oven which the owner had purchased new a few years ago. He said the toaster oven was located on a counter in the kitchen and was used several times every week. The oven operated satisfactorily and had never required any service.

In the late afternoon on 5/31/94, the homeowner was at home preparing a turkey roast in the oven of the kitchen range. He received a telephone call informing him of the unexpected death of his wife's father in South Dakota. After completing the call and prior to leaving the house to pick up his wife at her place of employment, the homeowner turned off the oven. He said that upon returning home later with his wife, he reheated the turkey roast either in the range oven or in a counter top microwave oven. He was quite certain that the toaster oven in the kitchen was not used that evening.

The following morning (6/1/94), the homeowner, his wife and their two daughters (ages 7 & 11), left the house at about 10:30 am and drove to South Dakota. They left a pet cat and hamster in the house. They did not have breakfast before leaving and the homeowner did not believe anyone used the toaster oven that morning.

On 6/4/94, at approximately 2:00 am, a neighbor who was sleeping was awakened by someone pounding on his door and telling him the house next door was on fire. After looking outside and seeing flames coming out of the kitchen window of the neighboring house, he called 911. He then fought the fire with his garden hose until the fire department arrived.

Although there was extensive smoke and heat damage throughout the house, flames were confined to the first floor kitchen. Fire officials and a private fire investigator determined that the point of origin was an area on the counter along the south wall of the kitchen. There was a hole burned through the counter top where a toaster oven had been situated. A deputy state fire marshal turned the toaster oven and other evidence over to an adjuster representing the homeowner's insurance company. The toaster oven was subsequently examined by a forensics electrical engineer.

The homeowner's claim with his insurance company was settled for

slightly more than \$115,000. The case was turned over to an outside attorney for subrogation. He has contacted the manufacturer, but they have not examined the toaster oven.

The engineer who examined the toaster oven has not prepared the report. He did indicate verbally that a solenoid failure occurred as evidenced by arcing of the surface windings. He said this failure was the same as one that was implicated in a 1984 residential fire he investigated. The manner in which a fire can occur as a result of this kind of failure is described in the assignment document.

PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION:

The product associated with this incident is a counter top electric toaster oven. The model # is "B1TR020". The toaster oven is marketed by Black & Decker Corp., 701 E. Joppa Rd., Towson, MD. 21204.

EXHIBITS:

1. Copy of assignment document.
2. Fire Marshal Report.
3. Fire Investigator Report.
4. Photographs.

U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

950120CCC 2262

AUTHORIZATION FOR RELEASE OF NAME

Thank you for assisting us in collecting information on a potential product safety problem. The Consumer Product Safety Commission depends on concerned people to share product safety information with us. We maintain a record of this information, and use it to assist us in identifying and resolving product safety problems.

We routinely forward this information to manufacturers and private labelers to inform them of the involvement of their product in an accident situation. We also give the information to others requesting information about specific products. Manufacturers need the individual's name so that they can obtain additional information on the product or accident situation.


Would you please indicate on the bottom of this page whether you will allow us to disclose your name. If you request that your name remain confidential, we will of course, honor that request. After you have indicated your preference, please sign your name and date the document on the lines provided.

☐

You are hereby authorized to disclose my name and address with the information collected on this case.

☒

My identity is to remain confidential.


this date.
D. Danks

4/25/95
(Date)

ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REQUEST FORM

Document Number X510215 B
Date of Incident 6/4/94 Category I.D. SECT 15/199
Follow-Up Requested _____ Hazard Analysis _____
Type Follow-Up Requested _____ Telephone Call _____
Headquarters Contact Jeanne M. Siebert Section 15
Assignment Message _____ On-Site

Please get: 1) details of incident
2) damage assessment
3) product
4) Dr. Svaris report.

Person(s) to Contact Mrs. [REDACTED]
Consumer [REDACTED] 217 Westminter, Wakarusa, MN
MN

Guideline _____

Requested By Jeanne Siebert
Task Number 950120 CCC 2262
Assigned to _____ Date _____

Memorandum

X 510315

To: John R. Vece, SI, FOCR

CC: MSP

From: Dennis D. Donath, U.S. Consumer Product Safety
Commission

Date: August 11, 1994

Subject: GE/Black & Decker Toaster Ovens, Models A8T26(GE)
and TR020/025(B&D)

On July 27, 1994, I visited Svare Forensics in Isanti, Minnesota, regarding an automatic coffeemaker that was involved in a house fire. While I was there, [REDACTED] told me about three fire incidents associated with toaster ovens.

The first occurred in August, 1984, in Shoreview, Minnesota, at the home of [REDACTED]. At that time, he owned a GE toaster oven, Model A8T26, which apparently caused a fire. A settlement was reached with the manufacturer. The attorney who has the file on that case is [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] explained the component failure responsible for the fire as follows:

To prepare toast, bread is placed in the oven and the door is closed. The operator moves the toast color selector dial to the desired setting and pushes the toast lever down. This causes the top and bottom heating elements to be energized. Current also flows to a bi-metallic thermostat which is adjusted by the toast color selector dial. When the toast is done, a solenoid is energized, which causes the toast lever to flip up, a bell to ring and current to the heating elements to go off. There is a master switch connected to the door which shuts off current to the elements whenever the door is opened. The operator can check on the toast at any time by opening the door.

Dr. Svare found that an arc had occurred on the surface windings of the solenoid in the 1984 incident. With the solenoid not functioning, the bell would not ring, the toast lever would not go up and the elements would

continue to heat until the operator smelled smoke and opened the door or the bread started on fire. Assuming that the operator removed the toast before it burned, the chances are that the lever remaining in the down position would go un-noticed. Thus, when the door was closed again, the heating elements would be energized. Depending on how close the oven was to combustibles and how long it remained on before someone noticed, a fire situation could develop.

950120 CCC 2242
On June 4, 1994, a fire occurred at the home of Mr. [REDACTED]
Westminster, Watertown, Minnesota. The contents of the home were declared
a total loss. The point of origin was a B&D toaster oven, Model B1TR020.
Dr. Svare found that the design of the toaster oven was essentially unchanged
from the earlier GE model, and that the solenoid failed after arcing occurred.
The case is being handled by Mr. [REDACTED] of Northwest Property
Adjusting, Minneapolis, Minnesota. [REDACTED] 612-545-9982.

On June 8, 1994, a fire occurred at the residence of [REDACTED]
3637 [REDACTED] Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minnesota. The fire was confined to the
kitchen area. The point of origin was a B&D toaster oven, Model TR025.
The case is being handled by Mr. [REDACTED] an adjuster for Midwest Family
Mutual Insurance Company (612-545-5000 ext. 220). This toaster oven is
essentially the same as the TR020 and both are covered by the same owners
manual. Dr. Svare has not concluded his investigation of this toaster oven,
however there are indications that the solenoid did not function properly.

Two attached photographs are of a B&D toaster oven Dr. Svare purchased for
testing and demonstration purposes. They show the location of various
components in the control section of the oven. The solenoid where arcing
occurred is to the left of the brass bell. The master switch is at the lower right
and is connected to the door by a metal rod.

The following documents are also attached:

1. GE parts list(1984)
2. B&D owners manual, Models TR020/025
3. Case info sheets, 6/4/94 fire
4. Case info sheets, 6/8/94 fire

Dennis D. Donath
Dennis D. Donath
Senior Investigator
Twin Cities Resident Post

STATE FIRE MARSHAL DIVISION
444 CEDAR STREET
SUITE 100-M, TOWN SQUARE
ST. PAUL, MN 55101-2156
PHONE: 612/215-0500
TCD: 612/296-2700



STATE OF MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

#2
950120 CCC 2262

March 31, 1995

Dennis D. Donath
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
316 North Robert Street
Room 142
St. Paul, MN 55101

RE: ~~_____~~
Watertown, MN
Fire of June 4, 1994
Our file no. 94010321

Dear Mr. Donath:

This will acknowledge receipt of your recent correspondence in regard to the above fire investigation.

Enclosed is a copy of our investigation report for this fire.

Yours very truly,

Thomas R. Brace
Thomas R. Brace
State Fire Marshal

TRB: (pb)

Enclosure

cc: Thomas Neudahl, Deputy State Fire Marshal

Department of Public Safety
Fire Marshal Division
285 Bigelow Building
450 North Syndicate Street
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104

FILE CLOSED

File No. 94010321

Occupant(s):

Address: [REDACTED] AVENUE NW

City: WATERTOWN

Phone: [REDACTED]

County: CARVER

Owner Name: [REDACTED] WAYNE SEVER

Owner Address: [REDACTED] AVENUE NW

Phone: [REDACTED]

City: WATERTOWN

State: MINNESOTA

Zip:

Type of occupancy: RESIDENTIAL DWELLING

Approximate Loss: \$30,000

Requesting agency: FIRE DEPARTMENT

Date and time of fire: 06/04/94 0210 Hours

Date and time of request: 06/04/94 0230 Hours

Initial fire department: WATERTOWN FDID:

Fire official contacted: CAPTAIN MARV SALOMEK

BCA contact: N/A Date:

Cooperating agency(s):

Fire Cause: ACCIDENTAL

Synopsis: THE NEIGHBOR WAS SLEEPING AND WOKE TO SOMEONE POUNDING ON HIS DOOR AND TELLING HIM THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR WAS ON FIRE. HE RAN OUTSIDE AND SAW FIRE COMING OUT THE SOUTH KITCHEN WINDOW. HE RAN BACK INSIDE, CALLED 911, AND THEN USED HIS GARDEN HOSE TO FIGHT THE FIRE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT ARRIVED TO FIND FLAMES COMING OUT THE KITCHEN WINDOW. THEY MADE AN INTERIOR ATTACK AND FOUND FIRE IN THE KITCHEN AREA. MY INVESTIGATION REVEALED THE FIRE STARTED FROM THE TOASTER OVEN SITTING ON THE KITCHEN COUNTER.

Completed by: THOMAS NEUDAHL

Date: 08/30/94

Disposition: CLOSED

INSURANCE RECORD:

Insurance Agency: ~~SHADON~~ AGENCY

Phone: ~~612-333-2200~~

Agent: ~~SHADON~~

City: JORDAN

Insurance Company: AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE CO.

City: MINNEAPOLIS

Policy Number: 829106

Inception Date: 12/01/93

Expiration Date: 12/01/94

Amount of Policy:

Building: \$85,000

Contents: ~~\$51,000~~

Other: \$0

Payable to:

Adjuster: ~~SHADON~~

Company: ~~MOORESTADT PROP ADJUSTING~~

Phone: ~~612-333-2200~~

Public: XX

Private:

REMARKS:

INVESTIGATION REPORT:

PEOPLE

Owner - [REDACTED] DOB 11/17/51 [REDACTED] N.W., Watertown;
612-955-2100 (w)
Reporting party - [REDACTED] DOB 9/5/62; 215 [REDACTED] Avenue N.W.,
Watertown; [REDACTED] 612-955-2105 (m)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I received a page from BCA Communications to call the Carver County Sheriff's dispatch for a house fire in Watertown. I made contact with Carver County by radio and was given the address of 217 Westminster Avenue N.W. in Watertown.

I arrived on the scene and was met by Captain MARV SALOMEK, who passed along the following information:

- The call time was 0210 hours and arrival was at 0218 hours.
- They arrived to find flames coming out the kitchen window and a lot of heavy smoke coming out of the house.
- They made an interior attack to the kitchen and found the fire confined to the kitchen area.
- The doors and windows were secure and forced entry was made through the front door.

The house was not occupied and it took awhile for friends in Watertown to locate the owners in South Dakota. The owners returned to Watertown around noon and were interviewed (see interviews).

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The structure is a two-story, residential dwelling with a full basement. It is 30' X 50' in size and has an attached, two-car garage. The house is over 100 years old and the front door faces east. The house is wood frame with balloon construction. It has lath and plaster walls and ceilings. The roof is pitched and covered with asphalt shingles.

EXTERIOR EXAMINATION

There is a V-pattern out the south kitchen window which goes up into the eaves and soffit above. I observed cracks in the front living room windows. Some window screens

were removed by the fire department for ventilation. The gas meter is located on the south side and was turned off. The electric meter is located on the southwest corner of the house and was pulled by Northern States Power Company.

INTERIOR EXAMINATION

The interior of the house suffered smoke and heat damage throughout. The fire originated in the 12' X 15' kitchen, which had lath and plaster walls and ceiling and a carpeted floor. The room contained a stove, refrigerator, dishwasher and kitchen cabinets. The room and contents were destroyed.

I observed a V-pattern on the kitchen cabinets pointing to the east side of the counter where the can opener and toaster were sitting. The upper cabinets have dropped down onto the counter top. The carpet on the floor in front of the cabinets is not burned.

I cleaned the debris away on the counter from the top down. Most of the debris is the contents of the upper cabinets. After removing the debris, I found the toaster oven and melted can opener. The counter top is burned through under the toaster oven. The fire continued down into the drawers of the cabinets.

I examined the line cords for the can opener and toaster oven. They looked okay and were still plugged into the wall outlet. The toaster oven was examined and showed melting in the components.

I re-examined the area and could eliminate all causes except the toaster oven or can opener.

EVIDENCE

The toaster oven is a Black & Decker, model no. B1TR020, 120 volts TS 1500 watts 50-60 HZ AC only UL Toaster Listed 228E. It and the melted can opener were turned over to the insurance adjuster and were sent to an electrical engineer for examination.

PHOTOS/SKETCH

Photographs of the scene were taken and a photo log will be included with the case file. A sketch of the kitchen area is also attached.

INTERVIEWS

I interviewed the owner, [REDACTED], who told me that:

- he lives with his wife, DIANE [REDACTED] (5/27/54), and two children, JESSICA [REDACTED] (1/20/83) and TAMARA [REDACTED] BEVERSON (8/18/86);
- they were notified about the fire while at the home of his wife's mother, [REDACTED] Oppel [REDACTED] in Elkton, South Dakota;
- they drove back home;
- they left at 10:30 A.M. on Wednesday and drove to his in-laws' because his father-in-law passed away;
- they were at his in-laws' house all day Friday and into Saturday until receiving the phone call about the fire;
- the last time they were in the house was Wednesday;
- he had no idea what caused the fire;
- he was not aware of any fire hazards or problems, other than the old wiring in the house;
- they had no problems with the electrical or heating;
- his wife smokes, but usually outside, not in the house;
- the appliances were about 5-6 years old and there were no problems with them;
- they don't use candles;
- there were no gas leaks;
- no staining or welding/soldering has occurred;
- there were no problems with children playing with matches;
- they had no theft or vandalism problems and he knows of no one mad at them;
- he has no flammable liquid storage in the house;
- he has started remodeling and knocked down plaster;
- the carpenter was going to start on June 13th;
- the house was locked, he double checked it;
- they had a cat and a hamster and both died in the fire;
- his financial condition is average;
- they bought the house in September of 1989 for \$67,000 and it has not been for sale;
- he has a mortgage of \$62,000, pays \$700 a month and is current;
- he has bank accounts at 1st American State Bank of Watertown with no problems;

- he has a car loan on a 1988 Buick and is current on the payments;
- they have no problems with credit cards, debts, taxes, lawsuits or liens;
- they have had no previous fires;
- he has never been arrested or convicted;
- they did not set the fire;
- it is possible that the toaster oven was left on;
- the oven was used Tuesday evening and he may have forgot to shut it off;
- he was upset due to his father-in-law's death.

I interviewed [REDACTED], who is the reporting party. [REDACTED] told me that:

- somebody came to his house, knocked on the door and said the house next door was on fire;
- he ran outside and saw fire coming out the south kitchen window;
- he ran back in and called dispatch to report the fire;
- all the fire was in the kitchen area;
- he wasn't sure if the neighbors were home;
- the house was locked when he tried the doors;
- he used a garden hose to knock down the fire on the outside of the house;
- he is a member of the Watertown Fire Department;
- he came home at 2345 hours and didn't see or smell anything unusual;
- he had no idea who the person was that knocked on his door, just someone out walking their dog.

File #94010321

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I feel this fire is accidental and was caused by the toaster oven sitting on the kitchen counter. It is possible the toaster oven was accidentally left on unattended and ignited the counter top material or the toaster oven shorted out.

This case may be closed.

Respectfully submitted,

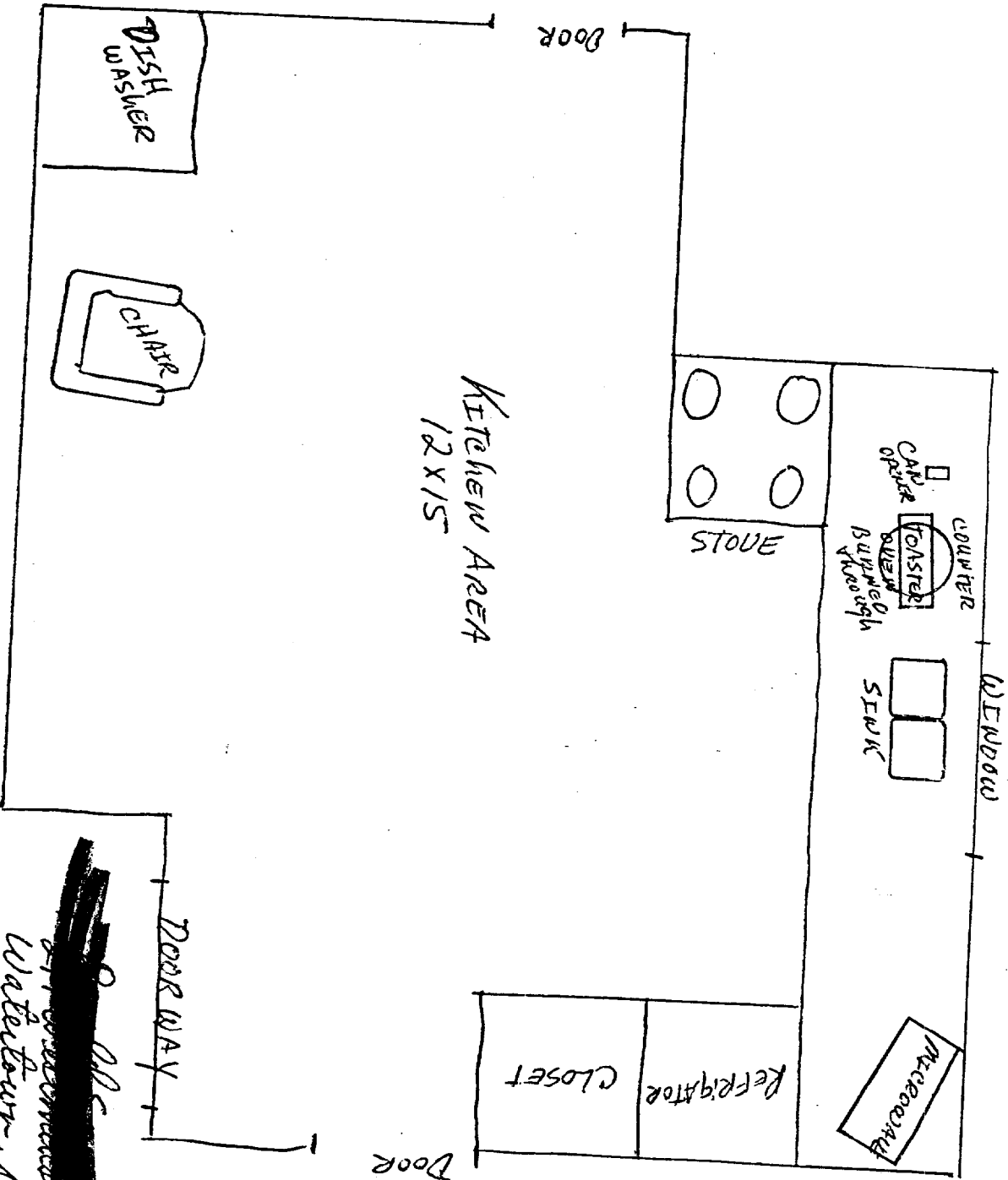
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas Neudahl".

Thomas Neudahl

Deputy State Fire Marshal-Investigator

TRN:pb

KITCHEN AREA
12x15



~~ALL INFORMATION IS UNCLASSIFIED~~
DATE 10/15/2010 BY SP-6 BJS/MLL

~~PHOTO 107~~
~~WINTERCORN, MN~~
CASE NO: 94010221

1. Front of house east in direction.
2. Southeast corner of house.
3. Exterior of kitchen window, south side of house.
4. Eave and soffit burned above kitchen window.
5. South side of porch and attached garage.
6. Front of garage north in direction.
7. North side of house.
8. Bags of recycling stored in porch area.
9. Livingroom, first floor.
10. Second floor bathroom above kitchen.
11. Second floor bedroom.
12. Southeast corner of kitchen.
13. Electric stove in kitchen.
14. Upper cabinet burned away in southeast corner.
15. Upper cabinet burned away in southwest corner. Note, V-pattern.
16. Refrigerator along west wall of kitchen.
17. Cabinets along west wall of kitchen.
18. Cabinets in southeast corner of kitchen.
19. Debris on top of toaster oven sitting on counter.
20. Toaster oven after removing debris.
21. Hole under toaster oven.
22. Same as 21.
23. Closeup of hole burned through counter and into drawers below counter.
24. Same as 23.

EVIDENCE RECEIPT

Date/Time: 6-4-94 0210Hrs Owner/Occupant: [REDACTED]
 Address: [REDACTED] Minister Ave NW City: Watertown
 Investigator: Neudahl Case#: 94010321
 ITEM

- #1 Black & Decker Toaster Oven
Model no: BITRO20
- #2 Can opener melted
Bolb items removed from kitchen counter

CHAIN OF POSSESSION:

Item(s)	Time	Date	Place	From	To
#1, 2	1030	6-4-94	Watertown	Kitchen	Van
#1, 2	1010	6-6-94	Van	Watertown	Jay Vanbeek admitted H. [Signature]

OPENED BY _____

RECEIPT GIVEN _____ RECEIPT MAILED _____ REPORT _____ STATISTICS _____

INVESTIGATION REPORT

INSURED: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] NW
Watertown, MN 55388

File No.: 1409A4-00A1

Policy No.: 82-91-06

Date of Loss: 6-4-94

THIS REPORT CONTAINS INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE AUTHOR AS OF ITS DATE WHICH THE AUTHOR BELIEVES TO BE PERTINENT TO THIS REPORT. ANY OPINIONS OR OTHER INFORMATION STATED IN IT ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN THE EVENT ANY NEW OR DIFFERENT INFORMATION IS LATER OBTAINED, OR FURTHER ANALYSIS IS PERFORMED.

I. REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

This assignment was received on June 8, 1994 from Mr. [REDACTED] Northwest Property Adjusters, 7515 Wayzata Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55426. Mr. [REDACTED] requested an Origin and Cause Investigation for a house fire that occurred on Saturday, June 4, 1994 at the Donald [REDACTED] residence, 217 Westminster NW, Watertown, MN, 55388. Mr. [REDACTED] Kvanbek stated Mr. [REDACTED] Austin Mutual Insurance Company's insured.

I began my investigation on June 8, 1994 when I traveled to the loss site where I met with [REDACTED]

II. PROPERTY INFORMATION

The building involved is a two-story single-family residence of ordinary unprotected wood-frame construction. The first floor consisted of the kitchen, family room, living room, dining room, bathroom and bedroom. The second floor consisted of three bedrooms and one bathroom.

INVESTIGATION REPORT:

Austin Mutual [REDACTED]

The electrical service consisted of a 100 amp circuit breaker panel located in the northwest corner of the basement. The panel was a newer model which appeared to be installed according to code. The heating system consisted of a natural gas-fueled forced air furnace located in the center of the basement. This unit was also a newer model and was not involved in the fire.

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION - INSURED

According to [REDACTED], he and his family left their home on Wednesday, June 1, 1994 at 10:30 AM and traveled to South Dakota. [REDACTED]'s father had passed away and they were returning to his home to make funeral arrangements. Prior to leaving the house, Mr. [REDACTED] stated they did not eat breakfast or use the kitchen area.

IV. BACKGROUND INFORMATION - FIRE DEPARTMENT

On Saturday, June 4, 1994 at 2:10 AM the Watertown Fire Department received a 911 call from the Ken Anders residence at 213 Westminster Avenue NW reporting flames coming from the window of the Severson house at 217 Westminster Avenue NW.

According to Fire Chief Hubie Widmer the first unit was on the scene at 2:18 AM and reported the kitchen area engulfed in flames and spreading vertically up the west side of the house. Firefighters quickly entered the building and extinguished the blaze.

Chief Widmer requested the assistance of Deputy State Fire Marshal, Tom Neudahl to assist in the investigation. It is Investigator Neudahl's opinion the fire started on the kitchen counter top in the southwest corner of the kitchen. Investigator Neudahl stated a toaster oven was located on the countertop in this area and believed the toaster oven overheated igniting the counter. Their investigation is ongoing.

V. FIRE ORIGIN AND CAUSE

The exterior of the home was examined from all sides and photographed. The west side of the house in the northwest corner showed flame damage coming out from the kitchen window and extending up the siding to the second floor and soffit area to the attic. No other exterior fire damage was noted. The interior of the home was photographed and the area of origin was identified as the first floor kitchen in the northwest corner of the home. In this area, flame damage was observed from countertop level to the ceiling. The upper kitchen cabinets above the countertop on the south side of the sink area were partially consumed by the fire. The countertop had a 12" hole burned through the top surface where the Black and Decker Toast-R-Oven was sitting.

The point of origin was identified as the countertop on the south side of the sink where the Black and Decker Toast-R-Oven, Model BITRO25, was located. In this area, burn patterns indicate the fire was the result of the Toast-R-Oven igniting the countertop material and smoldering until it burrowed through the countertop and fell into the lower kitchen cabinets underneath. The fire then extended up to the upper cabinets and across the kitchen ceiling.

All other potential ignition sources were carefully examined and ruled out based on burn patterns and physical evidence. This included spontaneous ignition, a carelessly discarded cigarette, an incendiary origin and failure of any of the other appliances in the kitchen.

Based on the information available to date, observations made at the scene and examination of the physical evidence, the cause of the fire is the result of a failure in the Black and Decker Toast-R-Oven which caused the unit to energize and over heat the countertop causing ignition. The oven was turned over to Robert Svare, a forensic electrical engineer, for further analysis.

Other items that were taken as evidence included the countertop, electrical outlet near the point of origin, ceiling light fixture above the sink,

INVESTIGATION REPORT:

Austin Mutual

microwave oven and electric range. All items were transferred to Robert
and are in storage at his facility.

The investigation is ongoing.

Lawrence S. Plack

Lawrence S. Plack

Certified Fire Investigator

8-9-94

Date



Photo No. 1 - Front of home where fire occurred.

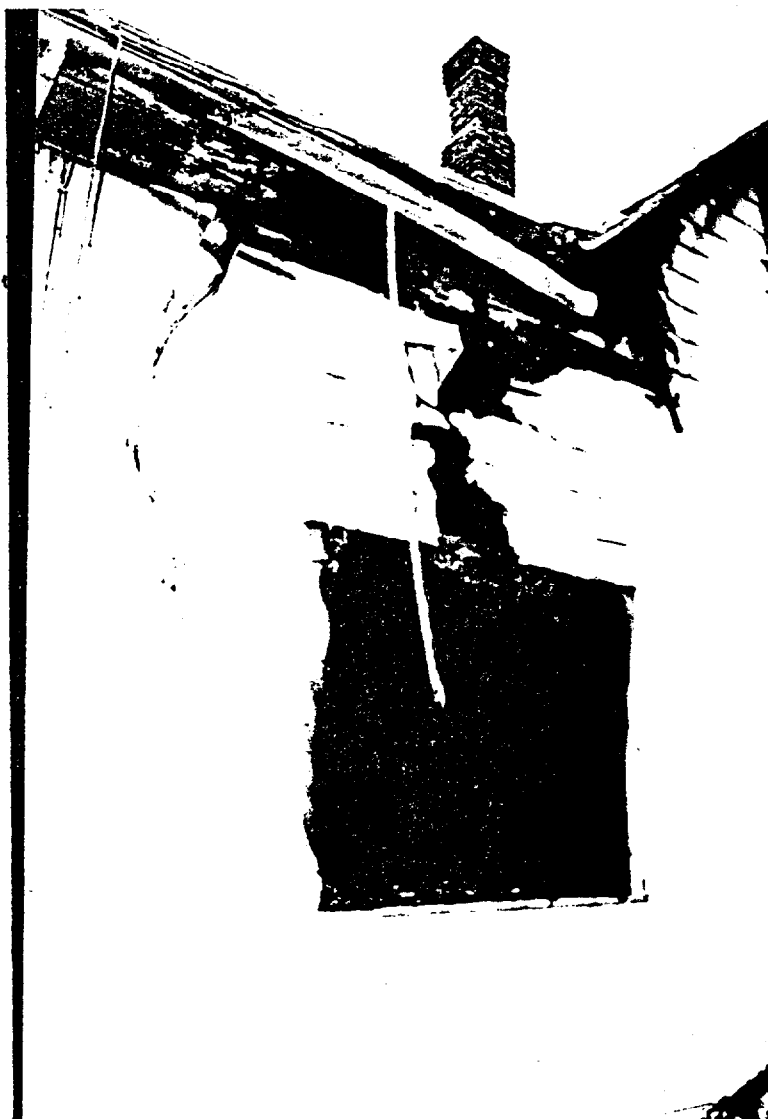


Photo No. 2 -
Fire damage shown outside of kitchen
window at side of house.



Photo No. 3
Another view.

Photo No. 4(below)

Corner of kitchen where fire originated. Note the hole in the countertop at the right side of photo.





Photo No. 5 - Prior to the fire, the toaster oven had been on the counter over the burn hole site. The remains of an electric can opener adjacent to the toaster oven are marked with an "X". The can opener was not plugged in.

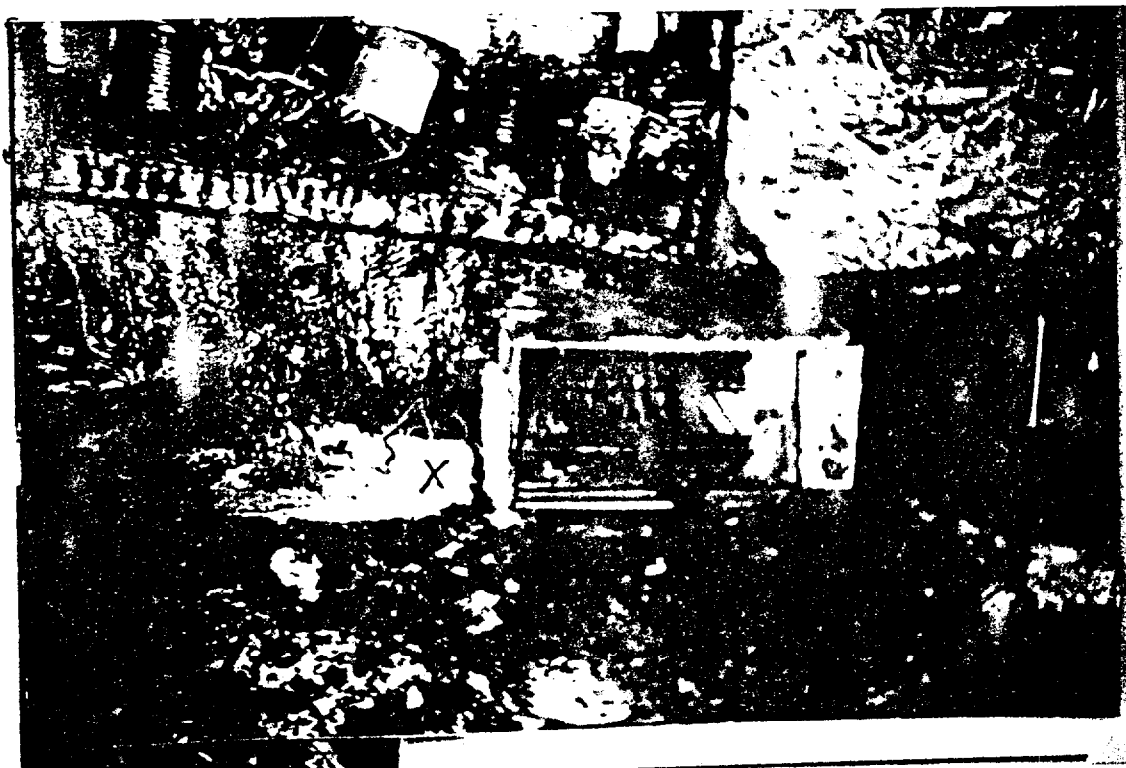


Photo No. 6 - Another view.



Photo No. 7 - A closer view of the burn hole.



Photo No. 8 - The drawer beneath the burn hole was removed during the fire investigation.



Photo No. 9 - Looking up through the drawer opening at the burned counter top.

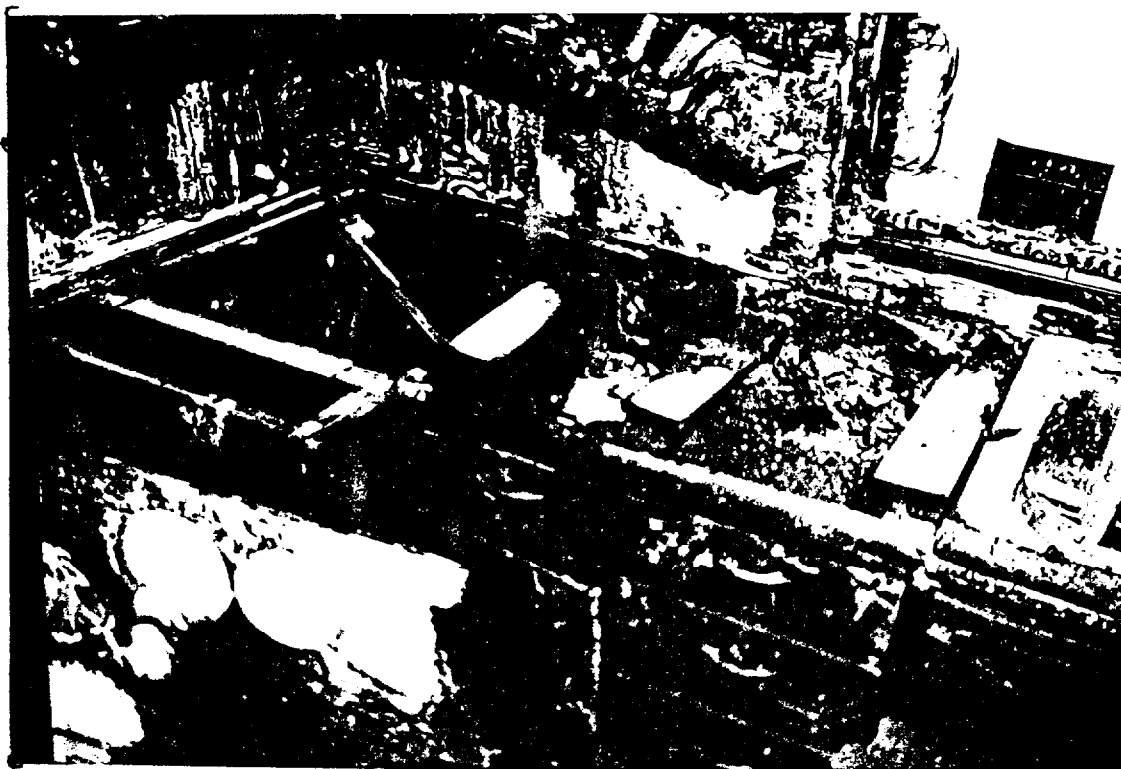
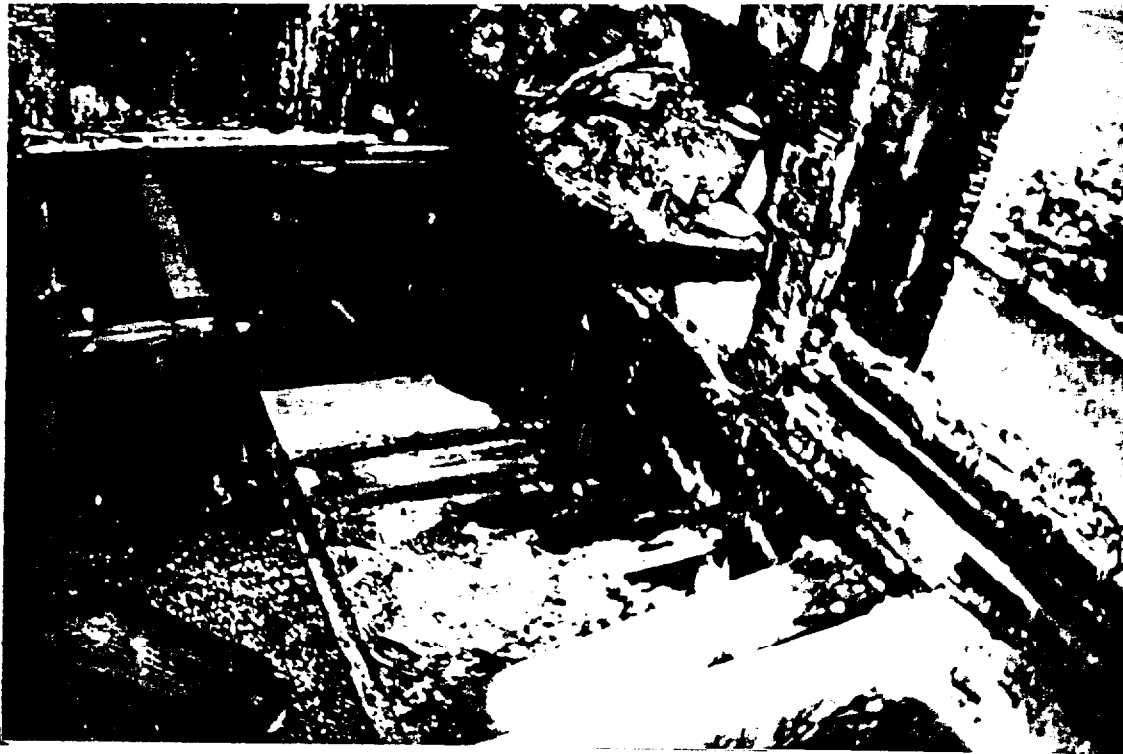


Photo No. 10 - The counter top was removed during the fire investigation. Note the burn pattern on the wood.



9501

Photo No. 11 - Another view after further dismantling of the counter top.

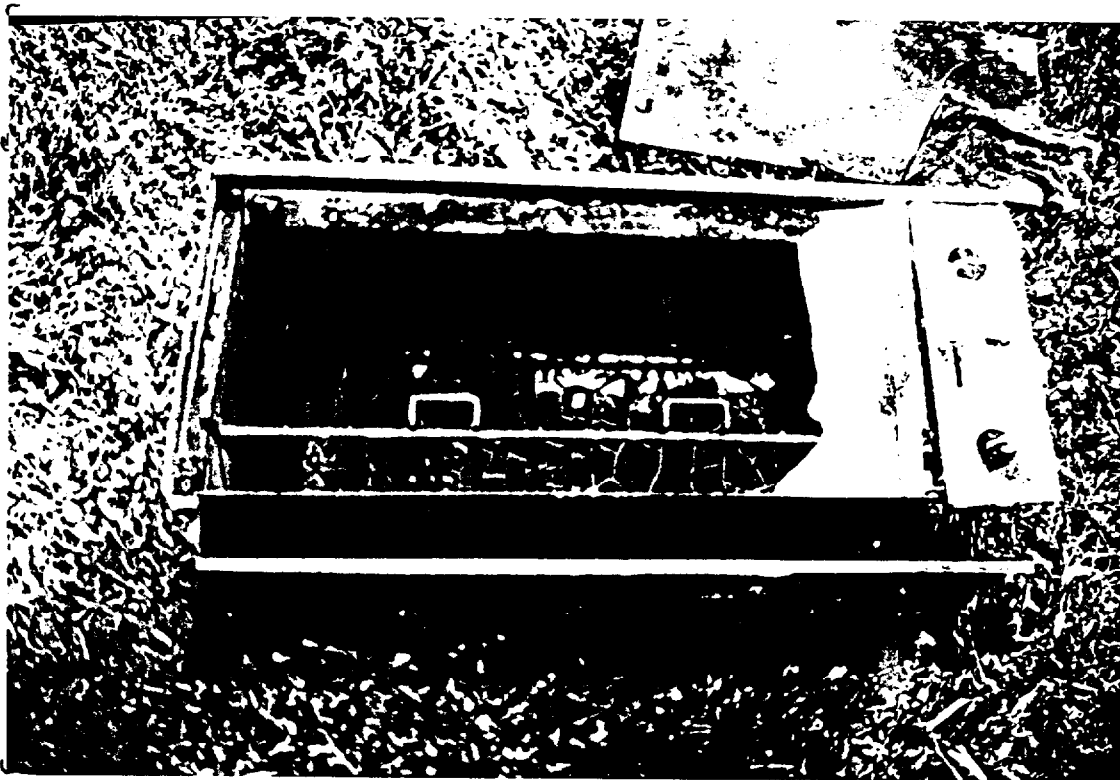


Photo No. 12 - Remains of the toaster oven after the fire.

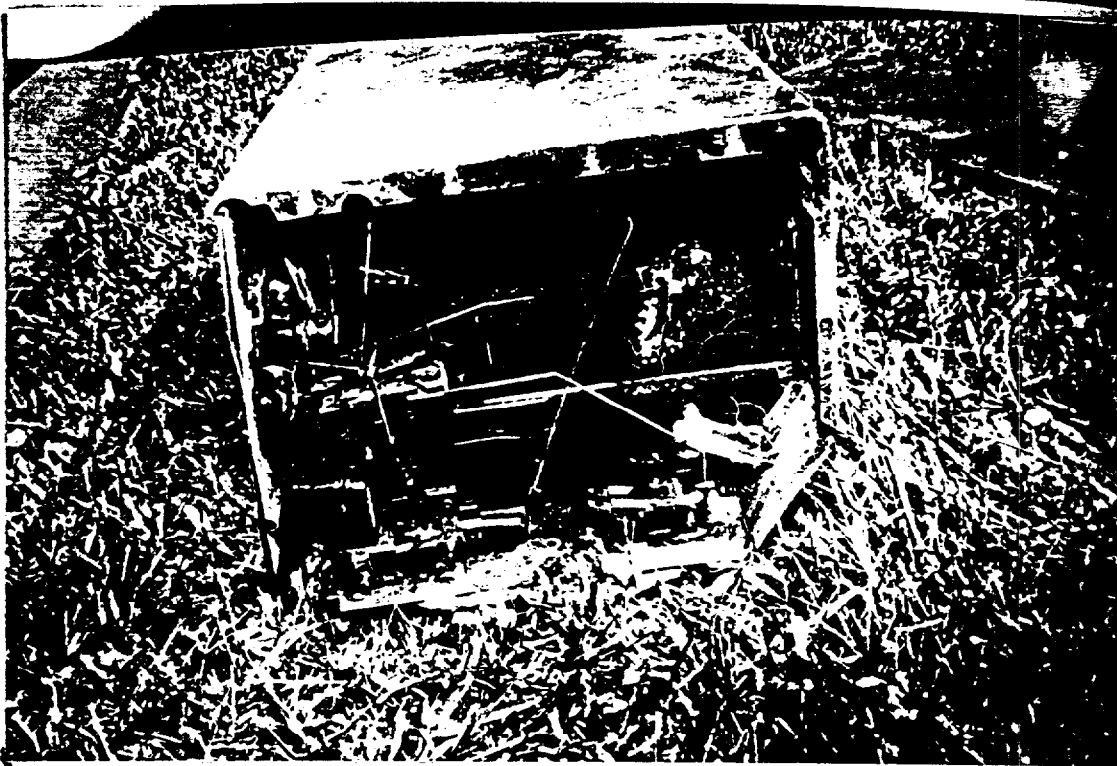


Photo No. 13 - Another view.